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NON CARBORUNDUM WHIMSICALI

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NON CARBORUNDUM WHIMSICALI

A Thesis

Presented to
the Faculty of the Conservatory
College of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Thomas Stanley Haynes

August 1951

Foreword to NON CARBORUNDUM WHIMSICALI

This composition for orchestra was performed as a ballet under the title "Big Top" with the Modern Dance Group of College of the Pacific on May 24 and 25, 1951. The orchestra for the performance was made up of two pianos, a banjo, tympani, flute, piccolo, clarinet, bass clarinet, trumpet, two trombones, and tuba. In this final setting a larger orchestra is involved.

The piece was cast in sonata allegro form because of the principle of contrasting themes and thematic development which characterizes this form. I wanted to present two very contrasting moods, one of primitive brutal force, the other of tenderness and artlessness; to play the one against the other, constantly developing the ideas until such a conflict should be reached that one would win out over the other. This is accomplished by extensive use of the first, or brutal subject throughout the development section, only occasionally interjecting references to the tender theme. In the recapitulation the tender theme is introduced first almost as if it had finally triumphed, but hardly is it stated before the theme of brutality returns intact, and is even heard in a telescoped form as the last phrase of the coda.

The title is written in what might be termed "fractured Latin". Translated loosely it means, "Don't let your whimsy wear you down".

Harmonically and rhythmically two distinct styles have been maintained throughout. The first section is harmonized polytonally over chords built of fourths and fifths, and has an underlying rhythm achieved by a hammered repetition of a particular pitch, with accented dissonances sounded somewhat erratically to give misplacement to the meter. The second section has a completely different harmonic and rhythmic pattern. The harmonies are rather impressionistic, using tone clusters and the interval of the major seventh extensively. The rhythm is mainly that of a very smooth waltz.

I felt that use of contrasting harmonic style, as well as the contrast customarily found in mood and rhythm, would do all the more to clarify the overall form and to show the conflict of the two moods being depicted.

The form of the piece has been given: sonata allegro. There is a short rhythmic introduction for five measures, followed by the opening thematic statement of the first section.



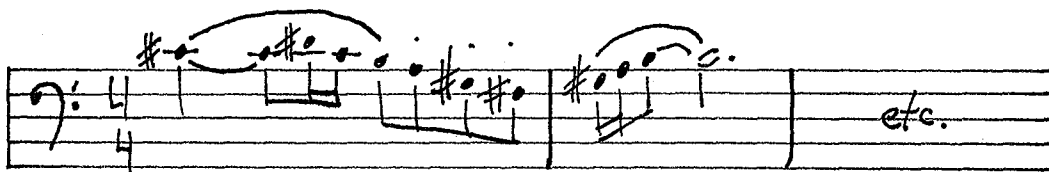
Although there is a polytonal effect, the underlying feel of the opening is that the key is "E". Other motives from the first section are:



and:



and:

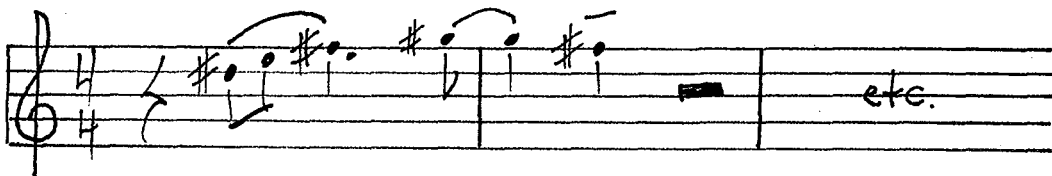


At measure 23 the second theme appears, in C major. The germ motive of this theme follows:



This is sequenced, the rhythm varied, the key changed, but ultimately ends in C major at measure 53, at which point an elision occurs, the development section beginning on the cadence of the second subject.

The development is based on the first subject, but references are made here and there to parts of the second, as at measure 74:



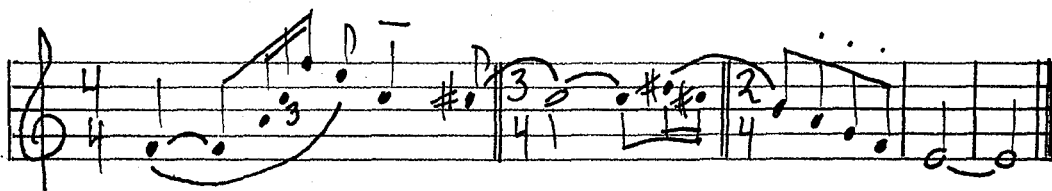
This is somewhat distorted, but clearly refers to the material of the second theme.

A fairly extended transition based on this same section begins at measure 110 and tapers off at measure 122 in the very slow repetition of the dissonance characteristic of the first section. From this point there is a steady buildup in intensity, dynamics, excitement, and harmonic structure to measure 168, where a transition to the recapitulation begins.

In the recapitulation, beginning at measure 172, the second theme appears first in E major. It is practically verbatim as in the exposition, except for the key change. At the cadence of this section there is an elision and the first subject, likewise in E, reappears. This occurs at measure 203. The first subject is stated once, concisely, and the coda begins abruptly at 218, using the six-note arpeggio from the climax of the development section.

Several references are made to parts of the development, then one last, telescoped statement of the first motive,

first section, closes the work.



Instrumentation: Because of the extremely heavy emphasis on rhythm throughout this work, there has been considerable alteration in the instrumentation from that of the standard symphony orchestra. In addition to the regular string section I have employed two pianos, tympani, banjo, and xylophone; and to attain a certain dryness of wind coloration only two flutes, one piccolo, two Bb clarinets, bass clarinet, bassoon, two horns, trumpet, and tuba.

Much of the texture of the work, particularly in the development section, is very complex. To get as much clarity of line as possible I have purposely cut the numbers of instruments available, thus reducing the possibility of blending tones, and enhancing the contrast in tone color. The desired effect is that of a large chamber music group.